CROSSROADS

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2025

from the pastor...

It's November already! Thanksgiving is just two weeks away. Soon it will be a new year. No, not 2026. I'm talking about the liturgical year, which starts with Advent on November 30. Here's what I have in mind for us:

Sunday, November 23: Cafe Bethany with a New Years Eve theme. We will have sparkling cider for a toast after a service featuring a "Journey through the Year."

Sundays, November 30, December 7, 14, 21: During Advent, with Cynthia Campbell's ***Christmas in the Four Gospel Homes***, we will tour each of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) imagined as a house with different defining characteristics to give us insight into the life of Jesus.

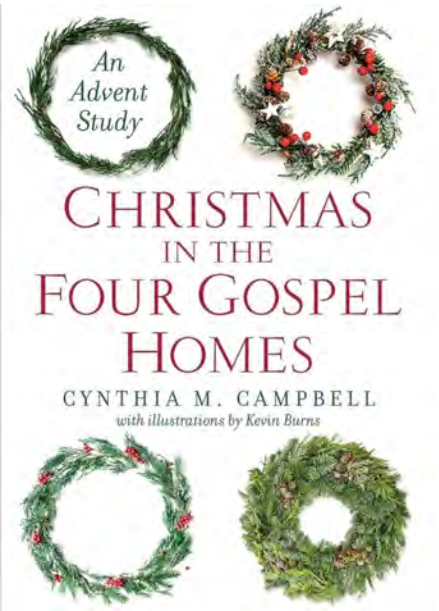
Sunday, December 21, at 5pm: We'll have a Blue Christmas service. If you're not familiar, a Blue Christmas service acknowledges & makes space for those who find the holiday season difficult due to grief, loss, loneliness, or other struggles. These services provide a space for quiet reflection, prayer, community, acknowledging that sorrow and joy can coexist & that God's presence is found in times of hardship.

Wednesday, December 24, at 4pm: We celebrate the birth of Jesus with our Family Christmas Eve Service. **It's About Jesus!**

I'm looking at the new year - liturgical AND calendar as our **YEAR OF ASTONISHMENT**. I have some ideas to celebrate that! We'll begin with a **book group for Advent** (Dec 2, 9,16, 23 at 6 pm). I follow a Facebook group, "Classic Literature." Someone posted asking what was the one book that you read, that has stuck with you. I was - dare I say - astonished at some of the selections. A Tree Grows in Brooklyn was listed quite frequently! But the one that really excited me was ***Till We Have Faces*** by C.S. Lewis. I still remember exactly where I bought it and what the weather was like. I loved it and now I am moved to share it with you.

In the meantime…Pay Attention, Be Astonished, Tell About It!

Love, Pastor Rob

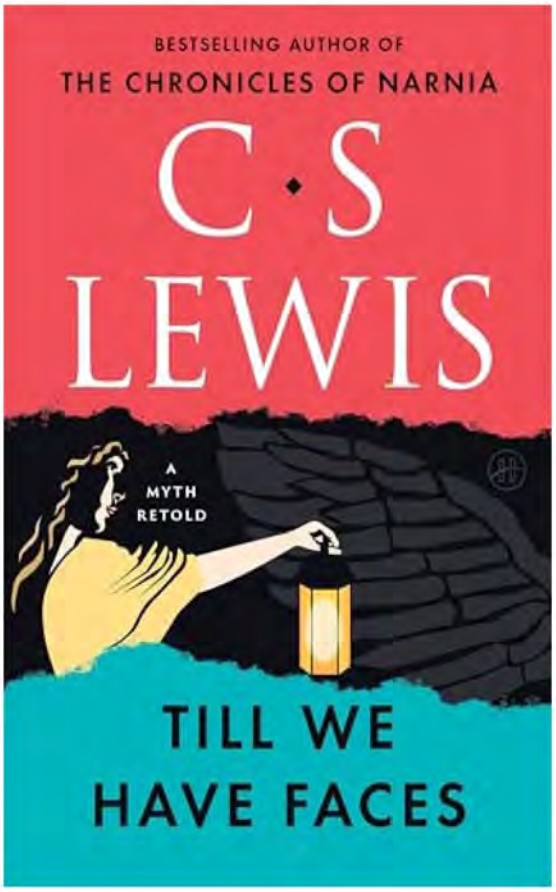


IN THIS ISSUE

- Pastoral Reflection
- Budget Update
- Photo Gallery
- Upcoming Events
- Birthdays

COMING SOON

Nov 23	Café Bethany
Dec 2	Advent Book starts
Dec 5	Ring Out Danger Labyrinth Service
Dec 14	Charge Conference
Dec 21	Blue Christmas Service
Dec 24	Family Christmas Eve Svc.



Advent Book Group

Tuesdays - December 2, 9, 16, 23
@6:00pm

A retelling of the ancient Greek myth of Cupid and Psyche. The novel is a deep exploration of themes including love (both possessive human love and divine love), jealousy, self-deception, faith, and the nature of the divine. The title's meaning is found in the idea that humans cannot truly understand or "meet" the divine until they shed their self-deception and see themselves as they truly are—until "we have faces."

A PEEK AT RECENT ACTIVITIES IN THE BETHANY COMMUNITY!

PHOTO GALLERY

BAGGED LUNCHES

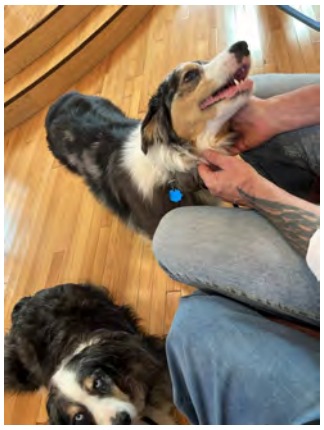
November 9th, we once again bagged 100 lunches for our unhoused neighbors.

BELL APPEAL

November 2nd, Bell Appeal performed during our service.

BLESSING OF ANIMALS

October 12th, we had our annual Blessing of Animals.



Stewardship 2026

Please consider how you can support Bethany's mission of personal transformation, a stronger faith community, and social justice. Please consider a financial commitment to Bethany and pledge for the coming year. Thank you for your generosity!

You can make pledges electronically at this web address:
https://bethanysf.breezechms.com/form/12544d99961037
or by using the QR code below.

BUDGET UPDATE

by Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Through October, we received $91,552 in donations and $146,676 in rental income for a total of $238,228. Donations for the year are running behind budget. Our expenses through October were $225,777. However, we have only made $2,203 in repairs versus the annual repair budget of $25,640. We have also increased our Reserves by $1,500.

Also included below is giving information. The distribution of pledges is shown below. Overall, our total average pledge amount is $5,932 per person. Total donations through October have been $91,552 across 49 people (for both pledgers and non-pledging donors) which results in an average gift of $1,868 person. Our available cash on October 31st was $125,834.

Thank you for your generosity and support,
Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Summary of Donations

Budgeted Giving for 2025 ==> $137,270

Actual Giving thru 10/31/25 ==> $91,552

Left to Go ==>$45,718

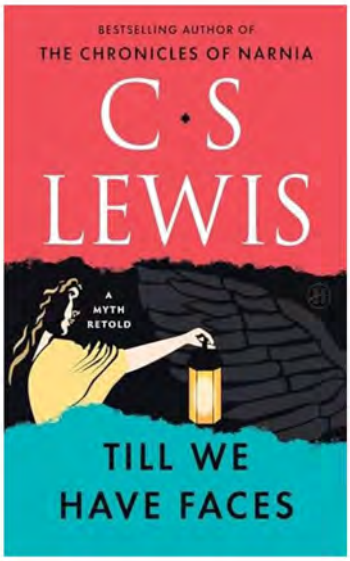
Actual vs. Budget	Actuals thru 10/31/25	Budget for 2025	Actual vs. Budget
Donations	$ 91,552	$ 137,270	$ (45,718)
Rent	146,676	169,797	(23,121)
Total Income	238,228	307,067	(68,839)
Staff & Programs	107,007	139,417	(32,410)
Tithe	20,500	30,707	(10,207)
Building Costs	96,067	117,774	(21,707)
Building Repairs	2,203	25,640	(23,437)
Total Operating Costs	225,777	313,538	(87,761)
			-
Increase to Reserves	(1,500)	(6,000)	4,500
Net Result	**$ 10,951**	**$ (12,471)**	**$ 23,422**

Cash Balances at 10/31/25	
Operating Cash	$ 125,834
Trustee Cash Reserves	$ 41,720
Memorials	$ 11,746

Distribution of Pledges			
Gift Amount	Number of Households	Pledge Amount	%
$1 to $2,500	9	$ 12,744	11%
$2,501 to $6,000	4	$ 18,400	16%
$6,001 to $9,999	3	$ 23,500	20%
$10,000 & Above	4	$ 64,000	54%
Total	20	$ 118,644	100%
Average/person		$ 5,932	

YTD Donations Received		
YTD pledges received	$ 73,599	80%
YTD other donations	$ 17,953	20%
Total donations	$ 91,552	100%
Total number of givers	49	
Average gift/giver	$ 1,868	

UPCOMING EVENTS



Advent Book Group–starting Tuesday, Dec 2nd
Tuesday evenings at 6 pm in December (Dec 2, 9, 16, 23), we'll be having a book group on C.S. Lewis ***"Till We Have Faces."*** A retelling of the ancient Greek myth of Cupid and Psyche. The novel is a deep exploration of themes including love (both possessive human love and divine love), jealousy, self-deception, faith, and the nature of the divine. Contact Pastor Rob for more information.

RING OUT Danger

Dec. 5th @ 9:30 am, every 1st Friday of the month, we ring our bells in solidarity with ***Ring Out Danger: People of Faith Opposed to Gun Violence*** (**https://ringoutdanger.org**). Please join us, in front of Bethany, no ringing experience is required.

Join us for a service of music and movement, Friday, Dec 5th at 7 pm. Each first Friday of the even numbered months will be an evening of chants and contemplative music inspired by the world's spiritual traditions. You are invited to explore the deeply centering tradition of walking the labyrinth, a journey inward and then back out. The service is very casual and is designed to be whatever you make of it. We will play music for about an hour.

(cont'd on next page)

UPCOMING EVENTS

(cont'd from previous page)

Annual Charge Conference, Sunday, December 14th at 12:30 pm –
Our Charge Conference this year is December 14th at 12:30 pm. This is a meeting of the church members to vote on official church matters.

Bible Study

Wednesdays 3-4pm on zoom. Join to discuss the scripture for the coming Sunday. All are welcome. Email Marilyn for more info mherand@sbcglobal.net

Small Groups – Sign-up at bethanysf.org

Group options: -2nd Saturdays each month @ 8:30am -2nd Wednesdays each month @ 7pm

CONTACT US

If you have articles, photos or announcements that you would like to share, please contact us!

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Find us online at **www.bethanysf.org**
FB **@bethanyumcsf** and IG **@bethany_umc_sf**

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

4: Marilyn Herand
14: Doug Hogin
18: John Nelson